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12 June 2024

Mrs Elizabeth Furber
Principal
All Saints Academy Dunstable
Houghton Road
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Dear Mrs Furber,

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of All Saints Academy Dunstable

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 21 May 2024, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place on 22 November 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders and governors, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, met with groups of pupils, checked safeguarding records, and met with members of the school's safeguarding team. I also considered the 50 responses to the staff survey. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as having serious weaknesses.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

The school has continued to improve since my first monitoring visit in November 2023. Leaders have clear, well-considered plans to move the school forward. These accurately identify the areas that the school needs to improve. They set out the steps that the school needs to take to do so. Leaders rigorously check how well these plans are being put into action. As a result, the school is making considerable progress towards the removal of the 'serious weaknesses' judgement in several key areas.

Behaviour around the school continues to improve. The number of exclusions continues to fall sharply. The school has clear expectations of how pupils should behave. These are well-understood by pupils and staff. Consequently, there is now little disruption to learning. When misbehaviour happens, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school is an increasingly calm and friendly environment. Pupils say that it is a school where they are safe to be different.

Pupils' attendance has also improved. Overall attendance is now close to, and persistent absence is below, national averages compared to other secondary schools. This is because the school has prioritised improving attendance. The school uses the rewards system and assemblies to celebrate improved and high attendance. Pastoral leaders work closely with pupils and families, and local services, to improve pupils' attendance. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as their peers, but because of the work done to support and encourage them, their attendance is improving.

The school uses alternative provision appropriately to support pupils who find school difficult. Leaders have improved how they check the quality of the curriculum at the alternative provisions used by the school. This ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils and that pupils are safe.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Almost all say they enjoy working here. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and how they can contribute to improving the school. Governors check how well pupils are doing and that they are kept safe.

The quality of education for pupils is not yet consistently strong enough. In the best lessons, teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use this to identify vital knowledge, including key vocabulary, that pupils need. They identify potential misconceptions and adjust the curriculum to address these. New concepts are modelled clearly and confidently. They use questioning effectively to gauge how much pupils have learned. They adapt the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils in these lessons make links to their past learning and grasp new concepts well. However,

some teachers do not precisely identify what pupils need to know to progress. They do not check well enough whether pupils have fully grasped new knowledge before moving onto new content. They do not always match work closely to pupils' needs. In part because of this, and because of historic issues with the quality of teaching, behaviour and

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attendance, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils do not always achieve well enough. Leaders are aware of the need to improve outcomes for pupils across the curriculum. They are providing useful training for staff to develop their knowledge and skills, but more work is needed to ensure that pupils have consistently high-quality learning experiences. This is reflected in last year's published outcomes which are well below other schools nationally.

The school carefully checks on how well pupils can read. These checks swiftly identify weaker readers. They are supported through well-chosen interventions, such as phonics sessions. As a result, these pupils become increasingly fluent and confident readers who can access the curriculum. While the school increasingly prioritises and celebrates reading, it is aware that not all pupils read enough. Books in the library are linked to pupils' reading ability. Pupils can access a range of e-books provided by the school. These promote reading of texts of different genres. Leaders have plans to ensure that pupils both understand the value of reading and read more widely and often outside of English lessons.

Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. They learn about topics such as healthy relationships. The expanded pastoral and safeguarding team supports pupils well when they need help. Trained on-site counsellors help pupils with their well-being and mental health. Pupils, therefore, have trusted adults who they can speak to if they have concerns.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of St. Albans, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Central Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Woodley
His Majesty's Inspector

